A COLLECTION OF 100 DURUMA (MIJKENDA) PROVERBS AND WISE SAYINGS

By

MARGARET WAMBERE IRERI

African Proverbs Working Group
Nairobi – Kenya

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to

My husband Peter Dickens Murithi

and

My daughter Patricia Muthoni Murithi

You laughed with me even when the project seemed impossible, and climbed with me that mountain to the peak of success.

Thank you for your inspiration.
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Thank you all for encouraging and enabling me to complete this project.
INTRODUCTION

LOCATION

The Duruma are one of the Mijikenda ethnic groups of the Kenyan coastal ridge. The Duruma people live on the semi-arid plains, one mountain range inland from the sea coast of eastern Kenya. The Duruma and Digo dominate the occupation of the Kwale region. This area extends from the Indian Ocean coast of Kenya along the Nairobi-Mombasa highway, and the south of the Tanzania border. Their area is marked roughly by the triangle of Taru, Mazeras and Lunga Lunga on the border. The main administrative center is Kinango, about two hours drive from Mombasa.

Mijikenda were also referred to as the “Nyika”, a term implying “bush people”. "Mijikenda" literally means, “nine homes”, referring to their common ancestry. The nine Mijikenda sub-ethnic groups are believed to be nine different homes of the same ethnic group. These are the Giriama, Digo, Chonyi, Kauma, Duruma, Jibana, Kambe, Rabai, and Ribe. Each speaks its own dialect of the Mijikenda language. Their closest neighbours are the Kauma, Giriama and the Jibana sub-ethnic groups.

THE ETHNOGRAPHIC LOCATION OF THE DURUMA ETHNIC GROUP IN KENYA
The Ethnographic location of the Duruma ethnic group in Kenya

MYTH OF ORIGIN

The Duruma share a common origin with the other Mijikenda sub-ethnic groups. They are said to have originated from Shungwaya in the southern Somali hinterland at the turn of the 17th century. They came along the River Nile. It is believed that they escaped constant attacks from the Oromo and other Cushitic ethnic groups, and settled in fortified villages along the coastal ridges of the southern Kenya coast.

Although they claim Singwaya affiliation, the Duruma also acknowledge that they were formed from three different groups who came together in the area of the Duruma Kayas and formed a single people. These include Digo from Kwale, fleeing refugee slaves from Mombasa called Mokua, and and Kamba immigrants (Spear, 1978). As a single group they adopted Mijikenda culture and traditions. Apart from Mtswakara they built other kayas, Gandini, Chonyi and Puma but Mtswakara is the regarded as the original Duruma kaya or ‘Duluma Kulu’.

History shows that they intermarried with the Arabs from Yemen (Persian Gulf) and gave birth to the Swahili culture and language. As a result, the Swahili language - Kiswahili - bears a close lexical similarity with all dialects of the Mijikenda people. The Duruma are very close in language and culture to the Rabai, another of the Mijikenda peoples living west of Mombasa. The languages of the Mijikenda are close to the major Bantu language of the East African coast, Swahili. Most Duruma are bilingual and speak Swahili and Digo (Chidigo).
CULTURE

The Duruma have fourteen (14) clans which are divided into two groups, murima and mwezi, each consisting of seven clans. Each clan may be divided into "major lineages" (called miyango - doorways). These are composed of several "minor lineages" (nyumba - houses). A minor lineage consists of closely related homesteads, which are socially and economically the most important units. A homestead varies in size from that of just a man and his wife living in a single hut, up to a large extended family of three or four generations, which in some respects can be seen as a loose affiliation to several semi-autonomous homesteads whose head are brothers.

A Duruma village

The bride joins the husband's clan if it differs from hers. Marriage within homesteads is discouraged, but most marriages are within the 14 clans. In a Duruma traditional polygamous household, each wife lives in a separate hut. Children of both sexes under the age of puberty live in their mother's hut. The more grown-up boys are encouraged to build and reside in their own hut, although food is still cooked and served by their mothers.

The Duruma maintain a dual descent system - both matrilineal (ukuche) and patrilineal (ukulume). Today inheritance is solely from father to son, though until recently cattle and other movable property were inherited from mother's brother to sister's son. The sons inherit land from their fathers including any goods or money they may have. Daughters do not receive any part of the inheritance.

The Duruma largely maintain their traditional family-village farming and herding life. The men take care of families, control the farming, and hunt wild animals. The boys and young men assist with the herding of the livestock. Women do all household work assisted by girls, and also do a great deal of the farming.
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The Duruma family eats together. The *Mvure* is the traditional food serving dish for the Duruma and the other Mijikenda ethnic groups, along the Kenyan coast. It is made of smooth wood and can hold plenty of food, which is eaten by several members of the family. Children eat together, and adults separately. This encourages bonding and learning to share things with each other.

*Mvule - a serving dish used at meal times.*

Values were transmitted through initiation songs, dances, proverbs, riddles and other forms of oral narratives. Emphasis on the use of proverbs and wise sayings are encouraged in ordinary daily conversation. This custom has helped even the children and the youth to learn their culture, learn norms and maintain good morals. Most children go to regular school to fit in modern society, but many older people are illiterate.

Two examples of Duruma proverbs

a) *Dzungu bomu karikosa ukoko mamaye.*
   English: The contribution of a poor person is not the same as for the rich one.

b) *Mrangulo kuyaya ndokumany tsaka.*
   English: The one who loses his way does not know the way.
The hierarchical order applies to marriage of homestead members. An elder brother should marry before younger brother. Marriages are not just alliances between spouses, but also between two clans. The first alliance is evident in the practical arrangements of setting up a household, and the second is expressed in ritual and healing practices. The stated amount of bride-wealth is paid to the girl’s family, usually in form of heads of cattle and palm wine. He is expected to demonstrate good leadership qualities which enable him to be accepted into the body of tribal elders. The
women do a lot of labor, but are excluded from participating in politics, religion, kinship issues, and major economic transactions.

The Duruma traditional dances are several. *Vunja mkebe* which both married and unmarried women can dance to. They use leg jingles, kayamba and ostrich feathers on the upper arms. The men wear vests and *kanga* wraps, while the women wear their *mahando*. The *Zandere* in which girls dance in aring and shake their shoulders. It is accompanied by instrument sounds of the *kayamba, mabumbumbu, gandu, vyyapuo and patsu*.

The Duruma women, like the other Mijikenda women, wear a special skirt called ‘*hando*’ which they wear at home and on safari. It is also reserved for very special occasions like community ceremonies. Elderly women prefer the *hando* because it is longer. Women of any age can wear it but restrictions are imposed on colours that are significant to practices that the community associates with.

**RELIGION**

The Duruma have some influence from their Muslim neighbors the Swahili, but are primarily traditional. The Kaya is a sacred site in the forest, where special gatherings and rites of passage are held. It is the traditional tribal center for the Mijikenda peoples, unique among northeastern Bantu.
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Traditional religion is strong and is evident as you walk around. Most people have charms openly exposed in their necks, wrists, and waist. It is meant to protect them from an evil eye and ward off wicked spirits that may try to harm their lives. Traditional shrines are also found in the area where elders go to make sacrifices to appease the ancestors.

The first Christian church established in Kenya was started by Ludwig Krapf of the Christian Missionary Society (Anglican) among the Rabai, neighbors of the Duruma. In the comity agreement during colonial rule, the Duruma area was assigned to the Methodists, who still maintain a visible presence, but welcome other Christian groups.

ECONOMY

The Duruma grow tobacco as a cash crop, and maize for their consumption. Kibandaongo, in the low-potential livestock-millet zone, is inhabited by the Duruma. Opportunities for off-farm employment are low. Key agricultural activities pertain to fruit farming where the main agricultural products are: oranges, pawpaw, mangoes, and coconuts.

They may also be found working as fishermen and shopkeepers. Some are successful business people. Some members become active traders with the Swahili, Arabs and the outside world.

Inland Kwale is not particularly popular with tourists however this is more than made up for by beautiful stretches of tropical forest in the Shimba hills. The Mwaluganje Elephant Sanctuary, owned and run by the local Duruma people, is also a tourist attraction in the county.

POLITICAL STRUCTURE

Until recently, the Duruma observed with other Mijikenda a practice of age-sets of four years in which generational circumcision was observed as an initiation into adulthood. Traditional Mijikenda society was primarily a gerontocracy. Old men have authority over young men, and both old and young men have authority over women. If members object to their positions in the hierarchy, they could leave and find other sources of power or support.

Clan elders lead and guide the community, making decisions and liaising with those of other clans.
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   - **English:** He who refuses to obey cannot command.
   - **Swahili:** Anaye kataa kutii hawezi kutoa amri.
   - **French:** Celui qui n’obeit pas, ne peut pas commander.
   - **Teaching:** This proverb teaches that a proud person cannot take responsibility for others, because he/she cannot spare time to handle other people’s issues.
   - **Bible parallel:** 1 Samuel 13:14
     “But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the LORD commanded thee.”

2. **Ahenzaye mali paka ahende kazi.**
   - **English:** He who loves money must labour.
   - **Swahili:** Anaye penda pesa lazima afanye kazi.
   - **French:** Celui qui aime l’argent, doit nécessairement travailler.
   - **Teaching:** The proverb teaches us to work hard if we expect to prosper. Nothing can be gained by sitting idly. We must make efforts to get what we want.
   - **Bible parallel:** 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12
     “For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat. For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies. Now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living.”

3. **Aheshimuye abomu utengeneza njiro ya ubomuwe.**
   - **English:** A man who pays respect to the great paves the way for his own greatness.
   - **Swahili:** Anaye waheshimu wakubwa hutengeneza njia ya ukubwa wake.
   - **French:** Celui qui respect les grands, prepare un chemin pour etre grand aussi.
   - **Teaching:** It reminds us to treat people as we would want them to treat us. We should respect others, accept them and even with their weaknesses.
   - **Bible parallel:** Titus 2:7
     “Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity,“

4. **Arya na mjeni ela mahemoga aikire atuo.**
   - **English:** Dine with a stranger but save your love for your family.
   - **Swahili:** Kula na mgeni lakubwa hutengeneza njia ya ukubwa wake.
   - **French:** Manges avec l’etranger mais reserve l’amour pour ta famille.
   - **Teaching:** You may have a big circle of contacts, but don't forget about the relatives. They are the closest to you during your times of need, than a friend. Relatives are born within our circles and we don’t have a choice than to help them. In the African set-up, it is the expectation of the community that the extended family be taken care of without question.
   - **Bible parallel:** Matthew 25:35-40
     “For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’ Then the righteous will answer him,
saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’”

5. Asemaye mvula manya ya mpiga.
   English: He who praises rain has been rained on.
   Swahili: Aisifuye mvua imemyeshea.
   French: Celui qui glorifie la pluie, elle l’a mouille.
   Teaching: A person who talks about the goodness of another, knows the benefits he/she has achieved from doing so. The proverb teaches us that we should speak about the good deeds done by others, so that the community can know that they have good people who can be beneficial them too.
   Bible parallel: Hebrews 13:16
   “And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.”

6. Asiyemanya jambo mwenga yuman ya jambo rinjine.
   English: He who does not know one thing knows another.
   Swahili: Asiyejua jambo moja hulijua linguine.
   French: Celui qui ne connait pas une chose, save une autre.
   Teaching: The proverb teaches us that it is impossible for a person to know all things. Each kind of knowledge is valuable in its own way. This is shown through the different levels of wisdom and talent the Lord has given to each person. Each has a benefit in life.
   Bible parallel: Romans 12:6-8
   “We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

7. Atsimbiraye muyawe kaburi labda yunadzitsimbire mwenye.
   English: He that digs up a grave for his enemy may be digging it for himself.
   Swahili: Anaye mchimbia mwenzake kaburi labda anaj chimbia mweneye.
   French: Qui creuse une tombe pour quelqu’un il creuse pour lui-même.
   Teaching: The proverb is used to warn those who plan evil traps against other people. Whatever we plan against others can befall us too. We may fall victim of a situation we intended for another person. We should not try to set up the enemy because can be set up too.
   Bible parallel: Psalm 21:11
   “Though they intended evil against You And devised a plot, They will not succeed.”
   Zechariah 8:17
   “Also let none of you devise evil in your heart against another, and do not love perjury; for all these are what I hate,’ declares the LORD”

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8. **Badala la shida niraha.**
   **English:** After hardship comes relief.
   **Swahili:** Baada ya dhiki ni faraja.
   **French:** Apres la misere, c’est la joie.
   **Teaching:** After a storm there comes calm. It teaches that every problem comes to an end. It encourages people to be hopeful because whatever their problems, solutions can be found after a period of time.
   **Bible parallel:** Psalm 107:28-31
   “Yet when they cried out to the Lord in their trouble, the Lord brought them out of their distress. He calmed the storm and its waves quieted down. So they rejoiced that the waves became quiet, and he led them to their desired haven.”

9. **Bangili mwenga kayilavya mriro.**
   **English:** A single bracelet does not jingle.
   **Swahili:** Bangili moja haitoi sauti.
   **French:** Un seul bracelet ne sonne pas.
   **Teaching:** It reminds us that even in small things there can be advantages and great achievements. We need support each other in order to succeed. A single person may seem weak, but is capable of being successful if he/her teams up with others.
   **Bible parallel:** Judges 15:15
   “He found a fresh jawbone of a donkey, so he reached out and took it and killed a thousand men with it.”
   1 Samuel 17:40
   “He took his stick in his hand and chose for himself five smooth stones from the brook, and put them in the shepherd’s bag which he had, even in his pouch, and his sling was in his hand; and he approached the Philistine.”

10. **Batu batu ya mala gogo.**
    **English:** Cutting small chips finishes the log.
    **Swahili:** Bandu bandu huisha gogo.
    **French:** Petit a petit, le chien fini l’eau.
    **Teaching:** This proverb teaches us that we should do everything carefully and meticulously in order to complete the task successfully, and to be able to achieve the final goal. Doing things in a hurry usually leads to a failure. Slow but sure wins the race.
    **Bible parallel:** Proverbs 21:5
    “The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance, but everyone who is hasty comes only to poverty.”

11. **Bila chilongozi hutswa mwiru unatsanganyikirwa.**
    **English:** Without a leader, black ants are confused.
    **Swahili:** Bila kiongozi, mchwa nyeusi huchanganyikiwa.
    **French:** Sans leader, le fourmier noir confondre de choses.
    **Teaching:** When there is no leadership, there is no guidance. People need someone to lead them into the right direction of doing things, and making appropriate decisions. Otherwise, everyone makes their own decisions, some of which will be inappropriate.
    **Bible parallel:** Proverbs 11:14
    “Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety.”
1 Corinthians 14:33
“For God is not a God of confusion but of peace. As in all the churches of the saints, ”

12. Chakurya chiricho mlomoni kachidzangwe kufika ndanini.
   English: The food that is in the mouth is not yet in the stomach.
   Swahili: Chakula kilicho mdomoni bado hakijafika tumboni.
   French: La nourriture qui est sur la bouche n’a pas encore atteint l’estomac.
   Teaching: We should not count on things we do not have at hand. We can hope to acquire them, only to fail to do so. Make use of what you have to achieve your goal.
   Bible parallel: James 4:13-17
   “Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit”— yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. Instead you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.” As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.”

13. Chijiko cha dzikoni kachogopha moho.
   English: A spoon for the kitchen does not fear the fire.
   Swahili: Kijiko cha jikoni hakiohopi moto.
   French: Une louche de la cuisine ne craint pas le feu.
   Teaching: The proverb is used to refer to people who are already used to staying in difficult situations. They are not affected however bad the situation or environment might be, but other people feel it is not appealing.
   Bible parallel: James 1:2-5
   “Consider it pure joy, my brothers, when you are involved in various trials, because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance.”

14. Chilomba cha moho uriwa wa moho moho.
   English: Hot soup is drunk when still hot.
   Swahili: Mchuzi moto unywewa ukiwa bado moto.
   French: Une chaude sauce est a boire en etat chaleureuse.
   Teaching: This proverb encourages people to take up an opportunity immediately when it presents itself. Appreciate whatever is available to you, and make the best out of it, without expecting much more.
   Bible parallel: 1 Corinthians 9:24-25
   “Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable.”

   English: A leader who does not take advice is not a leader.
   Swahili: Kiongozi asiye sikia mawaidha si kiongozi.
   French: Un leader qui n’entend pas les conseils n’est pas leader.
   Teaching: A leader should always listen to guidance from the members of the community. A rigid leader who does not appreciate correction will make mistakes which will affect the community members negatively.
A COLLECTION OF 100 DURUMA (MIJIKENDA) PROVERBS AND WISE SAYINGS

Bible parallel: Proverbs 15:31-33
“He whose ear listens to the life-giving reproof Will dwell among the wise. He who neglects discipline despises himself, But he who listens to reproof acquires understanding. The fear of the LORD is the instruction for wisdom, And before honor comes humility.

   English: A good thing sells itself, but a bad thing treads on itself.
   Swahili: Kizuri cha jiuza, kibaya cha jitembeza.
   French: Une belle chose se vende, tandis qu’une mauvaise se publie.
Teaching: It is used as a warning to those people in a community who are not of good nature, and have bad intentions. A good person or thing is known without being advertised, but a bad thing or person has to be worked on in order to be seen as good or acceptable. The evilness of a person over-shadows any goodness they may have within themselves.
Bible parallel: Luke 6:45
"The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart”

17. Chondo chilavya undachipata mara mrongo umwenga ya chicho.
   English: What you give, you get ten times over.
   Swahili: Unachopeana, utapata mara kumi zaidi.
   French: Ce que tu donnes, tu le recevras dix fois.
Teaching: It teaches us about generosity. We should always assist other people so that they can also reciprocate when the opportunity arises.
Bible parallel: Proverbs 11:24
“One gives freely, yet grows all the richer; another withholds what he should give, and only suffers want.”

18. Chovu kachiricha kunuka.
   English: An evil person wherever he goes does not stop his evils.
   Swahili: Mtu muovu mahali aendapo haachi kasoro.
   French: Un malfaiteur fait les mals pourtout ou il va.
Teaching: It is believed that a person has no record of good deeds cannot just change to become good. This proverb is used to encourage people to change their behaviors positively so that the society can appreciate them, and not brand them as bad people forever. Every human being has a chance to change for the better.
Bible parallel: Jeremiah 25:5
“Turn now everyone from his evil way and from the evil of your deeds, and dwell on the land which the LORD has given to you and your forefathers forever and ever.”

19. Chumba chidide chinaidima kuphenya atu mirongo kumi.
   English: A small house will hold a hundred friends.
   Swahili: Chumba kidogo huweza kuwa na marafiki mia moja.
   French: Une seule maison peut avoir cent amis.
Teaching: This proverb teaches us about sharing whatever little we have. We should have an open heart, be generous to the members of the community. They will also be generous towards us.

Bible parallel: Acts 20:35
“In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’

20. Dia jeni karizuma mdzini.
English: A visiting dog does not bark in town.
Swahili: Mbwa mgeni habweki mjini.
French: Un chien visiteur n’aboit pas en ville.
Teaching: This proverb teaches us to humble ourselves when we are in the community. We should not try to prove ourselves as special compared to others. Accept your situation and live your life fully.

Bible parallel: Philippians 2:3
“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves.”

21. Dude bomurenye adabu kana.
English: A big person is not intelligent.
Swahili: Mtu mkubwa akili hana.
French: Un grand homme n’est pas intelligent.
Teaching: A person may be of mature age, or exposed to the ways of the world, but may not be intelligent. Wisdom comes from God and from experience. We should not be surprised by the lack of intelligence in some members of our society. We should not despise them, but appreciate and guide them.

Bible parallel: Romans 12:6-8
“Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.”

22. Dungu bomu kariskosa ukoko.
English: An old pot cannot lack the crust.
Swahili: Jungu kuu halikosi ukoko.
French: Un vieux pot ne peut pas manquer une croute.
Teaching: An old person always has wisdom built from a long life of experiences.

Bible parallel: 1 Kings 12:6
“There were some older men who had helped Solomon make decisions when he was alive. So King Rehoboam asked these men what he should do. He said, “How do you think I should answer the people?”

23. Dzungu bomu karikosa ukoko mamaye.
English: The contribution of a poor person is not the same as that of rich one.
Swahili: Kutoa kwa maskini si sawa na tajiri.
French: La contribution du pauvre n’est pas comme celle du riche.
**Teaching:** This proverb teaches about inequality. Our abilities can never be equal. Some people have better resources, skills or talents, which enables them to give more to the community than others. We should appreciate these differences.

**Bible parallel:** Luke 21:1-4

“Jesus looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the offering box, and he saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins. And he said, ‘Truly, I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them. For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on.’”

24. *Fahari airi anapho pigana myasi ndizo zirumirazo.*

**English:** When two elephants fight, it is the grass that gets trampled.

**Swahili:** Ndovu wawili wapiganapo, nyasi ndio hukanyagwa.

**French:** Quand deux elephant se batten,

**Teaching:** It teaches that when there is a problem between two people, it does not only affect those disagreeing, but also those around them suffer.

**Bible parallel:** Mark 9:33-34

“They came to Capernaum; and when He was in the house, He began to question them, “What were you discussing on the way?” But they kept silent, for on the way they had discussed with one another which of them was the greatest.”

25. *Fiho zodlifungwa phamwenga kaziedima kuvunzika.*

**English:** Sticks in a bundle are unbreakable.

**Swahili:** Fito zilizofungwa pamoja hazivunjiki.

**French:** Des tiges en fagot, ne peuvent pas se casser.

**Teaching:** It teaches us that unity and strong bonding holds people together and even the toughest challenges cannot disunite them. For example, a family can have a strong bond such that external interference cannot cause disunity among them. They will always stand by each other.

**Bible parallel:** Hebrews 10:24-25

“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”


**English:** Speak softly and carry a big stick; you will go far.

**Swahili:** Ongea pole pole na ubebe fito kubwa; utaenda mbali.

**French:** Parle doucement et porte un fagot des tiges, tu iras loin.

**Teaching:** The proverb teaches that we should treat people politely, and they will come to you for guidance. They will respect you because you are approachable and helpful.

**Bible parallel:** Ephesians 4:29

“Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.”

27. *Haki ya mutu kairiwa*

**English:** A person’s right cannot be eaten.

**Swahili:** Haki ya mtu hailiwi.
**French:** On peut pas manger le droit d'une persone.
**Teaching:** It teaches that one’s rights cannot be taken away from them by anyone. Rights are used to protect and benefit a person. It is important to do justice to all, without fear.
**Bible parallel:** Proverbs 31:8-9
“Open your mouth for the mute, for the rights of all who are destitute. Open your mouth, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy.”

28. **Henda chihendo chidzo na uchitsuphe baharini.**
**English:** Do a good deed and throw it into the sea.
**Swahili:** Tenda wema na uutupe kwenye bahari.
**French:** Fais du bien et jette dans l’océan.
**Teaching:** It encourages us to do positive things for others without expecting them to pay us back. We should also not keep telling others about it, but be silent and move on as if it never happened. When we least expect it, another person will do the same for us.
**Bible parallel:** Mathew 6:3-4
“When you give to the poor, don’t let anyone know about it. Then your gift will be given in secret. Your Father knows what is done in secret, and he will reward you.”

29. **Jamii mbigdo ni yiyatu ambayo mlume ni chiziwi na mche ni chipofu.**
**English:** In a good family the husband is deaf and the wife is blind.
**Swahili:** Katika jamii nzuri bwana ni kiziwi and bibi ni kipofu.
**French:** Dans une bonne famille, le mari est sourd et la femme est aveugle.
**Teaching:** A husband should not listen to people gossiping about his wife; she too should not start observing his weaknesses. It is the only way to prevent external interference and maintain their relationship and bond.
**Bible parallel:** 1Timothy 5:13-14
“Besides that, they learn to be idlers, going about from house to house, and not only idlers, but also gossips and busybodies, saying what they should not. So I would have younger widows marry, bear children, manage their households, and give the adversary no occasion for slander.”

30. **Jogolo achire a yunanyala chiphanga.**
**English:** When the cock is drunk, he forgets about the hawk.
**Swahili:** Jogoo akilewa, usahau mwewe.
**French:** Lorque le coq est ivre, il oublie le focon.
**Teaching:** The proverb warns us that in any state, we should never forget about honor. We should uphold it regardless of circumstances surrounding us, every day of our lives.
**Bible parallel:** 1 Peter 2:17-19
“Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor. Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust. For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly.”

31. **Kaburi ra mutu ri kanda ya ghurufu.**
**English:** A man’s grave is by the roadside.
**Swahili:** Kaburi la mtu liko kando ya barabara.
32. Kakuna dawa yakuphoza utsungu.

- **English:** There is no medicine to cure hatred.
- **Swahili:** Hakuna dawa ya kupoza chuki.
- **French:** Pas de medicament pour apaiser la haine.

**Teaching:** This proverb states that hatred will always exist. There is no cure to it at all. Some people will always dislike others because of various reasons, some unreasonable. We should love them back instead, regardless of their negative attitude.

**Bible parallel:**
- Matthew 5:43-45
  “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.”

33. Kahi za afena airi ajeri takunwa madzi phamwenga ni mtswango.

- **English:** Between true friends even water drunk together is sweet enough.
- **Swahili:** Kati ya marafiki wa kweli, hata kunywa maji pamoja huwa ni matamu sana.
- **French:** Entre les vrais amis, meme l’eau buve ensemble est tres douce.

**Teaching:** It teaches us that we should appreciate those who are genuine friends. Whether circumstances are good or bad, they are always the best company to be around.

**Bible parallel:**
- Proverbs 17:17
  “A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.”
- Mark 14:4-5
  “There were some who said to themselves indignantly, ‘Why was the ointment wasted like that? For this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor.’ And they scolded her.”

34. Kuanzira rini chifu chidzo chikakosa ui.

- **English:** The most beautiful fig may contain a worm.
- **Swahili:** Tini nzuri sana yaweza kuwa na mdudu.
- **French:** Le bon figue peut contenir des vers.

**Teaching:** The proverb teaches us that nobody is without error or weakness. A person may be considered good, but will have hidden weaknesses. We should, therefore, accept one another as we are.

**Bible parallel:** Romans 3:10
“As it is written: “None is righteous, no, not one; “
Romans 3:23
“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,”

35. Kukala phamwenga nividzo kuriko kukal kure na kure.
   English: Unity is strength division is weakness.
   Swahili: Umoja ni nguvu utengano ni udhaifu
   French: L’union fait la force, la separation est la faiblesse.
   Teaching: The proverb teaches us to be supportive of each other without wavering so that an enemy will not penetrate the bond. If a person is not firm about their relationship with others, the outsider can cause disunity easily and ruin the relationship.
   Bible parallel: Ruth 1:16-17
   “But Ruth said, "Do not urge me to leave you or turn back from following you; for where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God. "Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. Thus may the LORD do to me, and worse, if anything but death parts you and me."

36. Kutanana na inzi nichironda kuphola.
   English: Leaving the fly allows the wound to heal.
   Swahili: Kuachana na inzi ni kindonda kipoe
   French: Quitter une mouche, la plaie guerit.
   Teaching: This proverb is used as a warning that we should desist from inappropriate behaviors and activities, in order to be successful in life’s endeavors.
   Bible parallel: 1 Corinthians 10:13
   “No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it."

37. Kutsowa itu ni uhumwa.
   English: Poverty is slavery.
   Swahili: Umasikini ni utumwa.
   French: La pauvrete est l’esclavage.
   Teaching: It teaches us to focus on improving our livelihood by ensuring that our social and economic needs are provided for. Once you become poor it is very difficult to change your status. Prevent it before it happens.
   Bible parallel: 1 Kings 2:3
   “and observe what the LORD your God requires: Walk in obedience to him, and keep his decrees and commands, his laws and regulations, as written in the Law of Moses. Do this so that you may prosper in all you do and wherever you go”

38. Mandugu airi apiganapho ta aolaganapho mjeni ndiye aphalaye mali.
   English: When brothers fight to death, a stranger inherits their father’s estate.
   Swahili: Ndugu wapiganapo hadi kufa, mgeni ndiye huridhi mali ya baba yao.
   French: Quand les freres se tuent entre eux, l’etranger herite les biens de leur parent.
Teaching: It warns that when there are disagreements within a family, this disintegration leaves non-relatives to take control and make decisions on their behalf.

Bible parallel: James 4:1-2
"What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this that your passions are at war within you? You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask."

39. Mane mane ta pemba ni magulu ga chitanda.
English: Four by four up to Pemba are the stands of a bed.
Swahili: Maine maine mpaka Pemba ni miguu ya kitanda.
French: Quatre fois quatre jusqu’a Pemba sont les pieds du lit.
Teaching: This proverb teaches that we should do ordinary things and not try to do the impossible in life. There are certain norms, known to all people, which should be followed in doing anything, within a community. Unusual approaches may lead to failure of achieving our objectives.
Bible parallel: Romans 16:17
“I urge you, brothers and sisters, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them.”

40. Masikiro gatigo sikira masia ganatuana na chitswa chendapo ng’olwa.
English: Ears that do not listen to advice, accompany the head when it is chopped off.
Swahili: Masikio yasio sikiza wasia, huandamana na kichwa kinapo enda kung’olewa.
French: Les oreilles qui n’entendent pas le testament, s’en va ensemble avec la tête quand on la coupe.
Teaching: A person who doesn’t listen for the others, is subject to misfortune. Every wrong thing you do will have repercussions. We should heed advice given us by the wise. We should not wait to take warnings seriously when troubles befall us.
Bible parallel: Matthew 24:37-39
“For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.”

41. Mchee mudzo karicha kaila.
English: A beautiful wife does not lack a defect.
Swahili: Bibi mzuri haachi kasoro.
French: Une femme ne manqué pas les défauts.
Teaching: Outward appearance is misleading. A person or situation may seem appealing or comfortable, but it is not so. Nothing can be perfect in this life. We adjust to situations and in relationships to fit in.
Bible parallel: John 7:24
"Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.”
42. Mchia kana haki.
   
   **English:** A poor person has no rights.
   **Swahili:** Mnyonge hana haki.
   **French:** Un home pauvre n’a pas des droits.
   **Teaching:** The proverb reminds us that people without power or wealth are usually looked down upon and disregarded. They are intimidated and not considered of substance or helpful to anyone. We should encourage community members to treat them as any other member of the community.
   **Bible parallel:** Galatians 3:28
   “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.”

43. Mhenza gosi ni kukosa gosi.
   
   **English:** He who desires all, will get nothing or lose everything.
   **Swahili:** Mtaka vyote hukosa vyote.
   **French:** Celui qui veut tout, manqué tout.
   **Teaching:** The proverb teaches us about not being greedy. When you desire everything you lose consideration for others. One loses focus of community needs and only thinks of him/herself. This is detrimental to one self and can lead to segregation by family and community.
   **Bible parallel:** Luke 12:15
   “Then he said to them, “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.”

44. Migulu isiyo hurira huwingia kwa shimo la nyoka.
   
   **English:** Restless feet may walk into a snake pit.
   **Swahili:** Miguu isiyo tulia huwingia kwa shimo la nyoka.
   **French:** Les pieds qui ne se repose pas, entrent dans le trou du serpent.
   **Teaching:** This proverb is used as a warning about getting involved in things that a person is not familiar with. If a person is involved in business, in which he understands nothing or too little about, there is a probability that he will fail and not achieve the intended result. Otherwise, seek guidance from those who have knowledge about it.
   **Bible parallel:** James 1:5-8
   “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.”

45. Mikono minji hupunguza kazi.
   
   **English:** Many hands make work light.
   **Swahili:** Mikono mningi hufanya kazi kuwa nyepesi.
   **French:** Plusieurs mains rendent le travail facile.
   **Teaching:** When many people perform a duty, it becomes lighter and it is done faster. A burden shared becomes more bearable.
Bible parallel: Numbers 11:17
"Then I will come down and speak with you there, and I will take of the Spirit who is upon you, and will put Him upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, so that you will not bear it all alone.

46. Mjema achifiwa uchi nikutia madzi.
   English: When the wine tapper is praised, he dilutes the palm-wine with water.
   Swahili: Mgema akisifiwa pombe huitia maji.
   French: Quand on loue un taraud du vin, il le met de l’eau.
Teaching: This proverb warns about ruining their good reputations or good work. When we are praised about our good deeds, we should continue being even better, and not spoil it by doing wrong things. Reliability is important in life.
Bible parallel: Luke 16:10
“One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much.”

47. Mjeni loka mwenyeji aphole.
   English: Let the guest come so that the host may benefit.
   Swahili: Mgeni njoo mwenyeji apone.
   French: Le visiteur vient, pour que le hote soit guerit.
Teaching: In a community it is viewed as very beneficial to welcome a guest. A guest will often bring gifts, cross-cultural perspectives and other knowledge. We should accept new ideas in order to positively grow a person or community.
Bible parallel: Joshua 6:17
“And the city and all that is within it shall be devoted to the Lord for destruction. Only Rahab the prostitute and all who are with her in her house shall live, because she hid the messengers whom we sent.”

48. Mjeni wa wachongo wonekana mapema.
   English: A visitor with a bad eye is identified early.
   Swahili: Mgeni wa jicho mbaya huonekana mapema.
   French: Un visiteur a en oeil mauvais, se voit de bonne heure.
Teaching: It teaches us that we have to speak out our problems early so that they can be resolved. Nobody can know or understand another’s problems unless they speak about them. A person cannot be helped unless they express their needs and challenges. There is always an answer.
Bible parallel: Psalm 139:1-24
“To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David. O Lord, you have searched me and known me! You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar. You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O Lord, you know it altogether. You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me.”

49. Mrangulo kuyaya ndokumany tsaka.
   English: The one who loses his way does not know the way.
   Swahili: Mpotea nja hajui nja.
French: Celui qui perd son chemin ne le connait pas.
Teaching: This proverb teaches that we should always seek guidance. We cannot have knowledge of many things without being informed. When we fail to perform as expected, it is because we did not receive instructions.
Bible parallel: James 1:5
“But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.”

50. Msena wa asena ni msena wa asena.
English: The friends of our friends are our friends.
Swahili: Marafiki wa marafiki wetu ni marafiki wetu.
French: L’amí de mon ami est mon ami.
Teaching: We are all able to relate with one another even when we don’t have a choice. Once one person is our friend, we get to know their friends, whom we then develop a relationship with. It reminds us that in a community we need to stand up for one another.
Bible parallel: Ephesians 2:19
“So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,”
Matthew 12:48-50
“But he replied to the man who told him, “Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?” And stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.”

51. Msenao wa phephi mtu mui mibomu.
English: A close friend can become a close enemy.
Swahili: Rarifi wa karibu anaweza kuwa adui wa karibu.
French: Un proche ami peut être un proche ennemi.
Teaching: The proverb teaches us that we should be careful about how much we tell others about ourselves. Those who know us best can use the information to harm us.
Bible parallel: Proverbs 26:23-25
“Smooth words may hide a wicked heart, just as a pretty glaze covers a clay pot.”
Matthew 22:15-17
“Then the Pharisees met together to plot how to trap Jesus into saying something for which he could be arrested. They sent some of their disciples, along with the supporters of Herod, to meet with him. “Teacher,” they said, “we know how honest you are.”

52. Mtsumira dzuani ni kurya chivurini.
English: The one who searches with problems benefits during happy times.
Swahili: Mtafuta kwa shida hufaidi wakati wa raha.
French: Celui qui cherche dans le misère, gagne pendant les moments de jouissance.
Teaching: This proverb encourages hard work. One cannot achieve any wealth without making efforts. Everyone’s contribution helps to spur development and to generate wealth for individuals, family and community.
Bible parallel: Proverbs 14:23“In all toil there is profit, but mere talk tends only to poverty.”
53. **Muhumwa yusikira nzala, na pea tajiri yusikira nzala.**

**English:** Hunger is felt by a slave and hunger is felt by a king.

**Swahili:** Mtumwa uhisi njaa, na pia tajiri uhisi njaa.

**French:** L’esclave sente la faim, de meme pour le roi.

**Teaching:** The proverb teaches us that all human being are the same regardless of their social status. In life, all people experience similar difficulties whether they are rich or poor, young or old. Our human needs are the same, so nobody is more special than another.

**Bible parallel:** Galatians 3:28

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

54. **Mutu achikala tajiri yunaidima pia kuvala nguo zakutsakala.**

**English:** When a man is wealthy, he may wear an old cloth.

**Swahili:** Mtu akiwa tajiri anaweza pia kuvaa nguo kuu kuu.

**French:** Lorsqu’un home est riche, il porte des habits en grand-prix.

**Teaching:** This proverb teaches us that our physical looks and possessions do not portray our personal character. A person can be wealthy, but have poor character which the community views as negative. A person of good character is appreciated by others and is respected.

**Bible parallel:** Colossians 3:12-15

“Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.”

55. **Muwa umtswano kwa chilungo.**

**English:** Sugarcane is sweetest at its joint.

**Swahili:** Muwa ni mtamu zaidi kwa kiungo chake.

**French:** La canne a sucre est sucre sur ses joints.

**Teaching:** This proverb warns us to be aware that it is difficult to achieve some things, but at the end, a man will enjoy the result. Nothing good and of value comes easy. We struggle to achieve what we desire, through hard work and when we achieve it we are contented and value it. Usually what a person acquires easily is not respected or valued.

**Bible parallel:** 1 Corinthians 9:24-25

“You know that in a race all the runners run but only one wins the prize, don’t you? You must run in such a way that you may be victorious. Everyone who enters an athletic contest practices self-control in everything. They do it to win a wreath that withers away, but we run to win a prize that never fades.”

56. **Mvula yina nyerera ngozi ya tsui lakini kayilavya maba kwake.**

**English:** Rain beats a leopard’s skin, but it does not wash out the spots.

**Swahili:** Mvua hunyeshea ngozi ya chui, lakini haiyatoi madoa yake.

**French:** La pluie frappe la peau du leopard mais elle ne lave pas ses taches.
Teaching: The proverb teaches us to be courageous and have resilience. Whatever the troubles we experience in life, and they cause some kind of damage, they should not destroy our focus on what we want to achieve. We should forge ahead and continue leading a fruitful life regardless of challenges.

Bible parallel: 2 Corinthians 4:8-9
“...We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;”

15. Job 17:9
“The righteous keep moving forward, and those with clean hands become stronger and stronger.”

57. Mwanache achihambala yundamanya takuima.
English: By crawling a child learns to stand.
Swahili: Mtoto akitambaa hujua kusimama.
French: Quand l’enfant rampe, il s’apprend a marcher.
Teaching: This proverb teaches about perseverance when we encounter difficult circumstances. Pleasures are learned through a grief. We suffer but at the end we get relief and continue with a more comfortable situation.

Bible parallel: Joshua 1:9
“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.”

58. Mwana msikizi kambirwa kano nyinji.
English: A child who listens is not told many times.
Swahili: Mwana mwenye adabu haambiwi mara nyingi.
French: On ne dit pas deux fois a l’enfant qui ecoute les instructions.
Teaching: Obedience is a great key to success in life. A person who heeds advice succeeds in his endeavors. People want to associate with him and also to assist him because of the positive elements he/she portrays. He/she is a good role model.

Bible parallel: Proverbs 3:1-2
“My son do not forget my teaching, but in your heart keep my commandments for length of days and years of life and abundance will they give you.”

59. Mwana umufugavyo ndivyo akulavyo.
English: The way you bring up a child is the way he grows up.
Swahili: Moto umleavyo ndivyo akuavyo.
French: L’enfant grandit de manieres que tu lui eduques.
Teaching: This proverb teaches that the parent and community need to correct their children when they make mistakes, and guide them in the right direction. This helps them to have acceptable behavior and develop positive qualities to benefit them in their future.

Bible parallel: Proverbs 22:6
“Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it.”
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60. Mwenda pwani kauya chiphiphu.

**English:** One who goes to the coast does not return with nothing.

**Swahili:** Mwenda pwani harudi mtupu.

**French:** Celui qui va au ravage ne rentre pas mais vide.

**Teaching:** The proverb encourages people to strive and work hard, in order to benefit. Hard work is always rewarded. An idle person is surrounded by poverty, but a hard worker is able to fend for themselves.

**Bible parallel:** Colossians 3:23-24

“Whatever your task, work heartily as serving the Lord and not men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward, you are serving the Lord Christ.”

61. Mwenye hatima ya ulongozi tsi lazima autsakule.

**English:** He who is destined for power does not have to fight for it.

**Swahili:** Mwenye hatima ya uongozi si lazima aupiganie.

**French:** Celui qui est destine au pouvoir, n’a pas besoin de combattre pour ca.

**Teaching:** The proverb teaches that a person who is blessed with leadership skills at birth, does not need to struggle to become a leader. People should appreciate community members who have outstanding abilities to lead and give them the chance to do so.

**Bible parallel:** Exodus 18:21

“Furthermore, you shall select out of all the people able men who fear God, men of truth, those who hate dishonest gain; and you shall place these over them as leaders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties and of tens.”

62. Mwenye ng’ombe kanamlozi minji

**English:** One who owns cattle has no pride.

**Swahili:** Mwenye mali ya ng’ombe hana majivuno.

**French:** Celui qui a le troupeau, n’a pas d’orgueil.

**Teaching:** It teaches about humility. A person can be wealthy and still live without being proud. Usually such a person may be mistakenly identified as being poor, but in reality they may possess a lot of property. The members of the community respect such a person because he is able identify with them.

**Bible parallel:** 1 Peter 3:3-4

“Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes. Rather, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God’s sight.”

63. Myao ni yuyatu muenendaye phamwenga.

**English:** A friend is someone you share the path with.

**Swahili:** Rafiki ni mtu mnatembea kwa njia moja.

**French:** Un ami est celui que tu contribute les pas avec lui.

**Teaching:** The proverb teaches us to identify a true friend as one who supports us in our endeavours. In times of difficulties and joys they are with us.

**Bible parallel:** 1 John 4:1

“Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.”
64. Neno mwenga la uulongo rinaidima kukananga manji garigo ga ukweli.
   English: One falsehood spoils a thousand truths.
   Swahili: Neno moja la uongo uharibu maelfu yaliyo na ukweli,
   French: Un seul mot mauvais detruit le miliers qui portent la verite.
   Teaching: The proverb warns us that it is easy to lose honor, just by telling one single
lie. We should be truthful in all we do so that we uphold trust in community and to
ourselves.
   Bible parallel: Acts 5:1-10
   “But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, and kept
back some of the price for himself, with his wife's full knowledge, and bringing a portion
of it, he laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your
heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back some of the price of the land?"

65. Ngoma ichipigwa sana kairicha kuhumbuka.
   English: If a drum is beaten too much it eventually bursts.
   Swahili: Ngoma ikipigwa sana mwishowe hutoboka.
   French: Quand un tambour est frappe fort, finira pour exploser.
   Teaching: This proverb teaches us that we should have self-control. Doing anything
excessively is not good. Whatever we do should have limits so that appropriate results
are achieved. A pleasant action can have negative outcome if not controlled.
   Bible parallel: Proverbs 25:26-28
   “Like a muddied spring or a polluted well are the righteous who give way to the
wicked. It is not good to eat too much honey, nor is it honorable to search out matters
that are too deep. Like a city whose walls are broken through is a person who lacks self-
control. ”

66. Nguma ni nguma.
   English: Fame is fame.
   Swahili: Sifa ni sifa.
   French: Glorieux, c'est glorieux.
   Teaching: This proverb teaches us that honour is important and special, whether great or
small. It makes a good person better. It should not be taken foregranted. In a community
we should honour those of good repute.
   Bible parallel: 1Timothy 5:17-18
   “Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who
labor in preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, “You shall not muzzle an ox
when it treads out the grain,” and, “The laborer deserves his wages.”

67. Ni mzuzu hicheye apimaye chimo cha ure wa madii achihumira miguluye.
   English: Only a fool tests the depth of a river with both feet.
   Swahili: Ni mjinga pekee anayepima kimo cha urefu wa maji kwa miguu yake.
   French: Seulement un sot qui mesure la profondeur du riviere avec deux pieds.
   Teaching: The person, who doesn't think about danger, is not wise. He doesn't even
guess that having stepped with two feet in water he may not find the bottom. The
proverb warns us against involving ourselves with issues without reasoning, because we could endanger our lives. We should approach matters carefully and be prepared to handle any consequences.

**Bible parallel:** Proverbs 13:16-25

“Wise people think before they act; fools don’t—and even brag about their foolishness. An unreliable messenger stumbles into trouble, but a reliable messenger brings healing. If you ignore criticism, you will end in poverty and disgrace; if you accept correction, you will be honored. It is pleasant to see dreams come true, but fools refuse to turn from evil to attain them. Walk with the wise and become wise; associate with fools and get in trouble.”

68. **Ni ng’ozi wa mtu mzuzu akataye mkowa kasidi akale huru.**

**English:** It is the fool’s sheep that break loose twice.

**Swahili:** Ni kondoo wa mtu mjinga anaye vunja kamba awe huru mara mbili.

**French:** C’est le mouton fou qui se detache deux fois.

**Teaching:** It teaches us not to repeat our mistakes in the future. Mistakes should teach us lessons to help us lead a better future. A stupid person makes the same mistakes, and does not learn, which makes him be disregarded by community members.

**Bible parallel:** Hebrews 12:10-11

“For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.”

69. **Njira mbiri zalinshinda fisi.**

**English:** Two paths defeated the hyena.

**Swahili:** Njia mbili zilimshinda fisi.

**French:** Deux chemins font perdu l’hyene.

**Teaching:** It is used to warn that a person should not be greedy and want everything because it will cause problems in life.

**Bible parallel:** Proverbs 23:4-5

“Do not toil to acquire wealth; be wise enough to desist. When your eyes light upon it, it is gone; for suddenly it takes to itself wings, flying like an eagle towards heaven.”

70. **Nyani achifikirwa ni kufa mihi yosi.**

**Swahili:** When a monkey’s time of death reaches, all the trees are slippery.

**English:** Siku ya kufa kwa nyani, miti yote huteleza.

**French:** Quand la mort du singe arrive, tous les arbres trebuchent.

**Teaching:** This proverb encourages us to be resilient. When we try all kinds of endeavours and they do not succeed, all our efforts may seem impossible. We should, therefore, use different approaches, to ensure we achieve new results and not failure.

**Bible parallel:** 2 Corinthians 4:8-9

“We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;”

Romans 8:18
“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.”

71. Nyani asie manya kuvyala miphorongondo yosi ni kunuka damu.
   English: When a monkey gives birth all the trees in the forest smell of blood.
   Swahili: Nyani akishazaa miti ya msitu yote hunuka damu.
   French: Quand le singe met au monde, tous les arbres parfument du sang.
   Teaching: When a poor person acquires wealth he goes bragging to everyone about their new wealth. He needs recognition. It reminds us that our achievements cannot be kept hidden, they are a community affair. Everyone wishes to be associated with an achiever.
   Bible parallel: Genesis 24:40
   ‘The Lord, before whom I have walked, will send his angel with you and prosper your way. You shall take a wife for my son from my clan and from my father’s house.”
   Genesis 24:40
   ‘The Lord, before whom I have walked, will send his angel with you and prosper your way. You shall take a wife for my son from my clan and from my father’s house.”

72. Pesa yina utsungu kuriko mundu.
   English: Money is sharper than the sword.
   Swahili: Pesa ina ukali kuliko upanga.
   French: L’argent est trenchant que la machette.
   Teaching: This proverb teaches us that money can be a source for a big and hostile envy. Not everyone favors those who have riches. They easily make them enemies because of envy.
   Bible parallel: Ecclesiastes 5:10
   “Whoever loves money never has enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with their income. This too is meaningless”

73. Phanapho na mahenzo kaphana dziza.
   English: Where there is love there is no darkness.
   Swahili: Palipo na mapenzi hapana giza.
   French: La ou l’amour existe, il n’y a pas du tenebre.
   Teaching: It teaches us that we should respect and care for one another. It creates transparency and prevents lies and jealousy in a relationship.
   Bible parallel: Psalm 139:12
   “Even the darkness is not dark to you, and the night is as bright as the day. Darkness and light are alike to you”.

74. Ridzavyo ndivyo nirichizidvyo.
   English: When it happens I will not have a choice than handle it as it is.
   Swahili: Linapotokea sina budi kulipeleka vile lilivyo.
   French: Quand il arrive, je n’aurai pas un choix que de le traiter tel qu’il est.
   Teaching: This proverb teaches us to accept our circumstances and challenges. We may expect better, but it may never be realized. We should deal with each issue as it presents itself, and move on with our daily lives. Our lives should not stagnate for whatever reasons, and we should rise above our circumstances.
Bible parallel: Daniel 3:17
“If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king.”
Lamentations: 3:21-23
“Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the LORD’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.”

75. Rotsimanya ulimbo gagwirwa mane mane
English: Those who do not know the latex trap will be caught very quickly.
Swahili: Wasiio jua mtego waainia ya ulimbo hushikwa haraka.
French: Ceux qui ne connaissent pas latex, ils seront rapidement prit.
Teaching: This proverb that when an ignorant person acquires knowledge, he/she becomes the wiser. We learn from experiences and get to know what we were ignorant about earlier. Sometimes we may watch others achieving goals while we wonder how they do that. The lesson therefore, is that we should take interest in learning new things and should never feel that we cannot achieve what others have.
Bible parallel: Philippians 3:13-14
“Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus”

76. Samaki mumwenga waoza bahari nzima.
English: One fish rots the whole ocean.
Swahili: Samaki mmoja huoza bahari yote.
French: Un seul poisson fait pourrir tout l’océan.
Teaching: The proverb teaches us that one person is capable of causing serious trouble for others single handedly. One person can be the source of problems in a family, community or other establishment, such that there is no peace, no teamwork or brotherhood. This should be observed so that he/she is reprimanded and corrected in order to change to become a better person.
Bible parallel: 3 Romans 23
"There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"
1 Corinthians 10:13
"No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it"

77. Sikiro karichira chitwa
English: The ear does not bypass the head.
Swahili: Sikio halipiti kichwa.
French: L’oreille ne depasse pas la tete.
Teaching: Authority follows certain order. Those under an authority must respect it and not try to resist it. We cannot all be leaders. We should also respect those who are older than us.
Bible parallel: Colossians 3:22 “Slaves, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not with eye service as men pleasures but in singleness of heart, fearing the Lord.”

78. *Teke rakuku karimolaga mwanawe*

**English:** The kick of a hen cannot harm its chick.

**Swahili:** Teke la kuku halimuui mwanawe.

**French:** Le coup de pied d’une poule ne peut pas tuer son poussin.

**Teaching:** The proverb teaches that the dissatisfaction and complaints of a weak/poor person do not affect the oppressor or authority in any way. Be firm when need be. People should not be disrupted in their endeavor, by side shows from people who wish them to fail. Ignore and proceed with your responsibilities because firm instruction and decision making should not be wavering in any way.

**Bible parallel:** Proverbs 11:30

“The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he who is wise wins souls.”

Matthew 6:14-15

“For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.”

79. *Tsimga angurumaye kainza anyama.*

**English:** A roaring lion kills no game.

**Swahili:** Simba anaye guruma hawindi mnyama.

**French:** Un lion rugit ne tue pas aucun gibier.

**Teaching:** Actions speak louder than words. The proverb teaches us that we must take the first step of action if we have to accomplish our intended goals. When we only discuss our plans and don’t undertake the business, we will achieve nothing. We should act and not just talk.

**Bible parallel:** 1 John 3:18

“Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.”

James 2:14 - 17

“What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled,” without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.”

80. *Tsongo lazima ahumire nyoga za ayae kujengera kuloye.*

**English:** A bird will always use another birds; feathers to feather its own nest.

**Swahili:** Ndege lazima atumie manyoya ya wengine ya wengine kujenga kiota chake.

**French:** L’oiseau utilisera toujours les plumes d’un autre oiseau pour construire son nid.

**Teaching:** This proverb encourages team work and companionship in our daily activities. Two minds are better than one. It is necessary to seek the help of other people when you are doing things and before making decisions. Great progress is made when a team makes a common effort to succeed.

**Bible parallel:** Ezra 3:9-10
“The workers at the Temple of God were supervised by Jeshua with his sons and relatives, and Kadmiel and his sons, all descendants of Hodaviah. They were helped in this task by the Levites of the family of Henadad. When the builders completed the foundation of the LORD’s Temple, the priests put on their robes and took their places to blow their trumpets. And the Levites, descendants of Asaph, clashed their cymbals to praise the LORD, just as King David had prescribed.”

81. *Uchihenza kugaoga charity ugavurire.*
   **English:** If you want to take a bath you must undress.
   **Swahili:** Ukipenda kuyaoga maji sharti uyavulie nguuo.
   **French:** Si tu veux prendre bain, tu dois te deshaniller.
   **Teaching:** It teaches that whatever someone needs, the person must struggle to obtain it. A person must venture into the unknown, take risks in order to achieve what they desire. Take a step towards undertaking an endeavor. Nothing happens on its own.
   **Bible parallel:** 2 Timothy 2:15
   “Do your best to present yourself to God as an approved worker who has nothing to be ashamed of, handling the word of truth with precision.”

82. *Uchilola nyunguyo ya chakurya kachindaphya.*
   **English:** If you watch your pot your food will not burn.
   **Swahili:** Ukitunza chungu chako, chakula chako hakiwezi kuungua.
   **French:** Si tu surveilles ton pot, ta nourriture ne s’enflamera pas.
   **Teaching:** It encourages us to be keen, meticulous and careful about how we do things, so that our actions bring positive end results. Being careless ruins our work.
   **Bible parallel:** Genesis 2:2
   “By the seventh day God completed His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done.”
   Matthew 24:42
   “Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming.”

83. *Udzisapsapo utsiuashe moho.*
   **English:** If you are in hiding, don’t light a fire.
   **Swahili:** Unapo jificha usiuwashe moto.
   **French:** Si tu te caches, n’allume pas le feu.
   **Teaching:** This proverb is used as a warning. It teaches us not to do unnecessary things which don’t add value to our lives. It makes us lose focus on our intended objective and therefore, fail. If we also expose our intentions too early, other people may also take away our plans and use them for their own benefit, while we lose.
   **Bible parallel:** Proverbs 21:23
   “Whoever keeps his mouth and his tongue keeps himself out of trouble.”
   Ecclesiastes 5:7
   “For when dreams increase and words grow many, there is vanity; but God is the one you must fear.”

84. *Udzo kauriwa.*
   **English:** Beauty is not eaten.
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Swahili: Urembo hauliwi.
French: La beaute n’est pas a manger.
Teaching: The proverb warns against laziness. Nobody should expect one’s looks to create wealth or give tangible benefits. It does not rescue a person from undertaking life’s responsibilities. You may be beautiful or handsome, but learn to work, for you cannot eat your beauty.
Bible parallel: Proverbs 21:25
“Despite their desires, the lazy will come to ruin, for their hands refuse to work.”
Colossians 3:23
“Whatsoever you do, work at it wholeheartedly as though you were doing it for the Lord and not merely for people.”

85. Uganga wa deni ni kuripha
English: The promise of a debt is to pay it.
Swahili: Ahadi ya deni ni kulipa.
French: La promesse d’une dette est de payer.
Teaching: It teaches that there is honour in paying other people’s debts. It is advisable to pay debts so that people will respect you, and be able to lend you what you wish in future. Also, offer help to your neighbour as he/she offered you when required to do so.
Bible parallel: Matthew 22:21
“Caesar’s,” they replied. Then he said to them, “So give back to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s.”
Matthew 22:39 “And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’

86. Ukare si ukongo
English: Old age is not sickness.
Swahili: Uzee si ugonjwa
French: La vieillesse n’est pas une maladie.
Teaching: This proverb teaches that an old person may be physically weak, but has wisdom from many years of experience. The elderly are a source of reference for the community and give guidance to members of all ages. They should be with respect and honour.
Bible parallel: Job 32:7
“I thought, ‘Those who are older should speak, for wisdom comes with age.’
1 Kings 12:6
“There were some older men who had helped Solomon make decisions when he was alive. So King Rehoboam asked these men what he should do. He said, “How do you think I should answer the people?”

87. Umwenga ninguvu utengano ni udhaifu.
English: Unity is strength, division is weakness.
Swahili: Umoja ni nguvu, utengano ni udhaifu.
French: L’union fait la force, la faiblesse est la separation.
Teaching: It teaches us that we should always support each other as a team, because when others are not in support of the rest, success cannot be achieved. People will respect a strongly bonded team, but a weak team can be fought easily.
88. **Usiku una masikiro.**

**English:** The night has ears.

**Swahili:** Usiku una masikio.

**French:** La nuit a des Oreilles.

**Teaching:** It teaches that even if we try to do things or say things in secret, they will eventually be exposed. When we cover truths, somehow they always become known.

**Bible parallel:** Luke 12:2-3

"But there is nothing covered up that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known. Accordingly, whatever you have said in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in the inner rooms will be proclaimed upon the housetops.

89. **Usiku wa dzidza kaudungwa ushanga.**

**English:** A dark night is not for stitching beads.

**Swahili:** Usiku wa giza haushonwi shanga.

**French:** Une nuit tenebreuse n’est pas a suturer les perles.

**Teaching:** It teaches that someone has to do all things openly and not in hiding. Secrete and dishonest activities will usually go wrong and trouble will be caused.

**Bible parallel:** Numbers 32:23

"...But if you will not do so, behold, you have sinned against the Lord; and be sure your sin will find you out."

90. **Usilole udziphogwa lola udzipho hereza.**

**English:** Do not look where you fell, but where you slipped.

**Swahili:** Usiangalie ulipoanguka, bali pale ulipoteleza.

**French:** Ne regarde pas la ou tu as tombe, mais la ou tu as trebuchet.

**Teaching:** Don’t look at your mistakes, look at what made you make the mistakes otherwise you may repeat the mistakes.

**Bible parallel:** Philippians 3:13

"Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead,"

Micah 7:8

"Rejoice not over me, O my enemy; when I fall, I shall rise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord will be a light to me."

91. **Using’ole nanga kwa nyota ya muyao.**

**English:** Do not set sail on another person’s sail.

**Swahili:** Using’oe nanga kwa nyota ya mwenzio.

**French:** Ne pilote pas sur l’etoile de ton ami.

**Teaching:** Avoid copying someone else. Just because someone else was successful in what he/she does, does not mean that you will attain the same success.

**Bible parallel:** Leviticus 18:3

‘You shall not do what is done in the land of Egypt where you lived, nor are you to do
92. Utsi rionyese nyani komu njira za msuhuni.
   English: You do not teach the paths of the forest to an old gorilla.
   Swahili: Usimfunze nyani mzee njia za msituni.
   French: N’enseigne pas le gorille les santiers de forest.
   Teaching: Don’t teach those who know something better than you.
   Bible parallel: Colossians 4:5-6
   “Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.”

93. Utsiwihe msuhu ukuphao makazi mwitu.
   English: Do not call the forest that shelters you a jungle.
   Swahili: Ulisite msitu unao kupa makazi mwitu.
   French: N’appelle pas la forêt qui t’a protégé le jungle.
   Teaching: The proverb teaches us to respect our seniors and those who support and care for us. We should not disregard any kind of assistance given to us, however minimal. When we offend those who can help us, then we have a problematic life in future when we shall have nobody to turn to for help. We should respect and honor those who we look upon as our helpers.
   Bible parallel: Leviticus 19:32
   “You shall stand up before the gray head and honor the face of an old man, and you shall fear your God: I am the LORD…”

94. Utsungu wa mwana aumanyaye ni mvyazi.
   English: The pain of a child is only known to the mother.
   Swahili: Uchungu wa mwana aujuaye ni mzazi.
   French: Celui qui connait la douleur de l’enfant, est la mere.
   Teaching: The proverb teaches that it is only a mother who can provide for and protect a child fully because of their special bond. People can have close relationships with others and realize its value. A true friend can protect you in times of need.
   Bible parallel: John 13:34-35
   “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

95. Uvukapho muho ndo udimapho kwamba mamba yuna nundu pulani.
   English: Only when you have crossed the river, can you say the crocodile has a lump on his snout.
   Swahili: Ukisha vuka mto tu, ndio unaweza kusema mamba ana numdu kwa pua.
   French: Seulement, après avoir traversé la rivière, tu peux dire que le crocodile a un morceau sur son nez.
   Teaching: This proverb is usually applied in reference to handling grief. It stresses that
it is only a person who has endured grief can understand the grief of another person. Other cannot relate to such a loss. 
Bible parallel: 2 Corinthians 1:3-4
“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.”

96. Uvumirivu unaidima kuirisa dziwe.
English: Patience can cook a stone.
Swahili: Uvimilivu unaweza kuivisha mawe.
French: La patience peut cuire une pierre.
Teaching: It teaches us that with patience, even the impossible can be done. If we undertake our activities with patience and care, we can succeed in doing anything.
Bible parallel: Psalm 37:7-9
“Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him; fret not yourself over the one who prospers in his way, over the man who carries out evil devices! Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath! Fret not yourself; it tends only to evil. For the evildoers shall be cut off, but those who wait for the Lord shall inherit the land.”

97. Vidzo vyara mango
English: Good things go with other good ones.
Swahili: Vizuri vyaenda na nzuri.
French: Des bonnes choses vont ensemble avec les bons.
Teaching: It teaches us that a person’s goodness is evil to another person. One can sacrifice to help someone, but instead of putting it into a beneficial use, they misuse the opportunity or money. When you do good deeds people will always do good deeds for you.
Bible parallel: James 2:14-17
“What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled,” without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead”

98. Viphii airi adide anaidima kumchira mwenga mbomu.
English: Two small antelopes can beat a big one.
Swahili: Swara wawili wadogo wanaweza kumshinda mmoja mkubwa.
French: Deux petits antilopes peuvent battre un grand.
Teaching: This proverb is used to encourage people. It shows that small affairs can lead to great success. A person may fear to undertake a major venture for fear of failure and under-estimating their ability to succeed. Confidence and faith are greater than physical strength.
Bible parallel: 1 Samuel 18:14
“And David had success in all his undertakings, for the Lord was with him.”
99. **Vyoni ni vyoniro**

**English:** Yours is yours even if it is bad.

**Swahili:** Chako ni chako hata kiwe kibaya.

**French:** Ce qui est a toi, est toujours a toi, malgre sa laidette.

**Teaching:** Nobody sees their own weaknesses and defects however serious they may be. It is also used to teach that people should value and appreciate whatever they own, even if it is not the best. Whether it is a weakness or strength, deformity or beauty, appreciate your qualities.

**Bible parallel:** 1 Samuel 16:7

“But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the Outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.”

100. **Wona gangu ga kwako kugaona.**

**English:** You can only see mine but yours you don’t see.

**Swahili:** Wayaona yangu tu yako huyaoni.

**French:** Tu peux seulement voir le mien, mais le tien, tu ne le vois pas.

**Teaching:** This proverb teaches people to identify and realize their weaknesses, before starting to point out those of others. Usually a person does not realize they are not perfect. They are quick to notice the weaknesses of other people. We should correct ourselves, before correcting other people.

**Bible parallel:** Romans 2:1

“You therefore have no excuse, you who pass judgment on another. For on whatever grounds you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things.”
Appendixes

RESEARCH PROPOSAL FOR THE COLLECTION OF 100 DURUMA (MIJIKENDA) PROVERBS AND WISE SAYINGS

By Margaret Wambere (Kenya)

**Location** The Duruma are one of the Mijikenda ethnic groups of the Kenyan coastal ridge. The Duruma people live on the semi-arid plains, one mountain range inland from the sea coast of eastern Kenya. The Duruma and Digo dominate the occupation of the Kwale region. This area extends from the Indian Ocean coast of Kenya along the Nairobi-Mombasa highway, and the south of the Tanzania border. Their area is marked roughly by the triangle of Taru, Mazeras and Lunga Lunga on the border. The main administrative center is Kinango, about two hours drive from Mombasa.

Mijikenda were also referred to as the “Nyika”, a term implying “bush people”. "Mijikenda" literally means, “nine homes”, referring to their common ancestry. The nine Mijikenda sub-ethnic groups are believed to be nine different homes of the same ethnic group. These are the Giriama, Digo, Chonyi, Kauma, Duruma, Jibana, Kambe, Rabai, and Ribe. Each speaks its own dialect of the Mijikenda language. Their closest neighbours are the Kauma, Giriama and the Jibana sub-ethnic groups.
The Ethnographic location of the Duruma ethnic group in Kenya

Myths of Origin  The Duruma share a common origin with the other Mijikenda sub-ethnic groups. They are said to have originated from Shungwaya in the southern Somali hinterland at the turn of the 17th century. They came along the River Nile. It is believed that they escaped constant attacks from the Oromo and other Cushitic ethnic groups, and settled in fortified villages along the coastal ridges of the southern Kenya coast.

Although they claim Singwaya affiliation, the Duruma also acknowledge that they were formed from three different groups who came together in the area of the Duruma Kayas and formed a single people. These include Digo from Kwale, fleeing refugee slaves from Mombasa called Mokua, and and Kamba immigrants (Spear, 1978). As a single group they adopted Mijikenda culture and traditions. Apart from Mtswakara they built other kayas, Gandini, Chonyi and Puma but Mtswakara is the regarded as the original Duruma kaya or ‘Duluma Kulu’.

History shows that they intermarried with the Arabs from Yemen (Persian Gulf) and gave birth to the Swahili culture and language. As a result, the Swahili language - Kiswahili - bears a close lexical similarity with all dialects of the Mijikenda people. The Duruma are very close in language and culture to the Rabai, another of the Mijikenda peoples living west of Mombasa. The languages of the Mijikenda are close to the major Bantu language of the East African coast, Swahili. Most Duruma are bilingual and speak Swahili and Digo (Chidigo).

Culture The Duruma have fourteen (14) clans which are divided into two groups, murima and mwezi, each consisting of seven clans. Each clan may be divided into "major lineages" (called miyango - doorways). These are composed of several "minor lineages" (nyumba - houses). A minor lineage consists of closely related homesteads, which are socially and economically the most important units. A homestead varies in size from that of just a man and his wife living in a
single hut, up to a large extended family of three or four generations, which in some respects can be seen as a loose affiliation to several semi-autonomous homesteads whose heads are brothers.

A Duruma village

The bride joins the husband's clan if it differs from hers. Marriage within homesteads is discouraged, but most marriages are within the 14 clans. In a Duruma traditional polygamous household, each wife lives in a separate hut. Children of both sexes under the age of puberty live in their mother's hut. The more grown-up boys are encouraged to build and reside in their own hut, although food is still cooked and served by their mothers.

The Duruma maintain a dual descent system - both matrilineal (\textit{ukuche}) and patrilineal (\textit{ukulume}). Today inheritance is solely from father to son, though until recently cattle and other movable property were inherited from mother's brother to sister's son. The sons inherit land from their fathers including any goods or money they may have. Daughters do not receive any part of the inheritance.

The Duruma largely maintain their traditional family-village farming and herding life. The men take care of families, control the farming, and hunt wild animals. The boys and young men assist with the herding of the livestock. Women do all household work assisted by girls, and also do a great deal of the farming.

The Duruma family eats together. The \textit{Mvure} is the traditional food serving dish for the Duruma and the other Mijikenda ethnic groups, along the Kenyan coast. It is made of smooth wood and can hold plenty of food, which is eaten by several members of the family. Children eat together, and adults separately. This encourages bonding and learning to share things with each other.
Myule - a serving dish used at meal times.

Values were transmitted through initiation songs, dances, proverbs, riddles and other forms of oral narratives. Emphasis on the use of proverbs and wise sayings are encouraged in ordinary daily conversation. This custom has helped even the children and the youth to learn their culture, learn norms and maintain good morals. Most children go to regular school to fit in modern society, but many older people are illiterate.

Two examples of Duruma proverbs:

   c) Chiduruma proverb: *Dzungu bomu karikosa ukoko mamaye.*
      Swahili: Kutoa kwa maskini si sawa na tajiri.
      English: The contribution of a poor person is not the same as for the rich one.

   d) Chiduruma proverb: *Mrangulo kuyaya ndokumany tsaka.*
      Swahili: Mpotea njia hajui njia.
      English: The one who loses his way does not know the way.
The hierarchical order applies to marriage of homestead members. An elder brother should marry before younger brother. Marriages are not just alliances between spouses, but also between two clans. The first alliance is evident in the practical arrangements of setting up a household, and the second is expressed in ritual and healing practices. The stated amount of bride-wealth is paid to the girl’s family, usually in form of heads of cattle and palm wine. He is expected to demonstrate good leadership qualities which enable him to be accepted into the body of tribal elders. The women do a lot of labor, but are excluded from participating in politics, religion, kinship issues, and major economic transactions.

The Duruma traditional dances are several. *Vunja mkebe* which both married and unmarried women can dance to. They use leg jingles, kayamba and ostrich feathers on the upper arms. The men wear vests and *kanga* wraps, while the women wear their *mahando*. The *Zandere* in which girls dance in a ring and shake their shoulders. It is accompanied by instrument sounds of the *kayamba, mabumbumbu, gandu, vyyapuo and patsu*.

The Duruma women, like the other Mijikenda women, wear a special skirt called ‘*hando*’ which they wear at home and on safari. It is also reserved for very special occasions like community ceremonies. Elderly women prefer the *hando* because it is longer. Women of any age can wear it but restrictions are imposed on colours that are significant to practices that the community associates with.
Religion: The Duruma have some influence from their Muslim neighbors the Swahili, but are primarily traditional. The Kaya is a sacred site in the forest, where special gatherings and rites of passage are held. It is the traditional tribal center for the Mijikenda peoples, unique among northeastern Bantu.

A Mijikenda elder walks into the Sacred Mijikenda Kaya Forest

Traditional religion is strong and is evident as you walk around. Most people have charms openly exposed in their necks, wrists, and waist. It is meant to protect them from an evil eye and ward off wicked spirits that may try to harm their lives. Traditional shrines are also found in the area where elders go to make sacrifices to appease the ancestors.

The first Christian church established in Kenya was started by Ludwig Krapf of the Christian Missionary Society (Anglican) among the Rabai, neighbors of the Duruma. In the comity agreement during colonial rule, the Duruma area was assigned to the Methodists, who still maintain a visible presence, but welcome other Christian groups.

Economy The Duruma grow tobacco as a cash crop, and maize for their consumption. Kibandaongo, in the low-potential livestock-millet zone, is inhabited by the Duruma. Opportunities for off-farm employment are low. Key agricultural activities pertain to fruit farming where the main agricultural products are: oranges, pawpaw, mangoes, and coconuts.
They may also be found working as fishermen and shopkeepers. Some are successful business people. Some members become active traders with the Swahili, Arabs and the outside world.

Inland Kwale is not particularly popular with tourists however this is more than made up for by beautiful stretches of tropical forest in the Shimba hills. The Mwaluganje Elephant Sanctuary, owned and run by the local Duruma people, is also a tourist attraction in the county.

**Political Structure** Until recently, the Duruma observed with other Mijikenda a practice of age-sets of four years in which generational circumcision was observed as an initiation into adulthood. Traditional Mijikenda society was primarily a gerontocracy. Old men have authority over young men, and both old and young men have authority over women. If members object to their positions in the hierarchy, they could leave and find other sources of power or support.

Clan elders lead and guide the community, making decisions and liaising with those of other clans.

**REFERENCES**

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4. Collaborators: Simon Chidanga - +254 702 201 821  
   Hamisi Muaje Ndegwa - +254 706 608 685  
   Abdalla Omar Tambwe - +254 718 936 881

**WRITING OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of this research are:

1. To collect a hundred proverbs and wise sayings from the Duruma ethnic group.

2. To translate these proverbs and wise sayings into English.

3. To produce ten booklets.

4. To publish them in the E-books of Afriprov.org
A COLLECTION OF 100 DURUMA (MIJKENDA) PROVERBS AND WISE SAYINGS

**BUDGET**

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**TOTAL**          $ 500